

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

NUKEWORK



Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, Yukiya Amano, left, from Japan waits for the start of IAEA's board of governors meeting at Vienna's International Center, in Vienna, on Monday, March 1, 2010.

Read more on Page A7

SPORTS NEWS

ORANGE CRUSH



Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim makes a point during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game against Providence, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010, in Providence, R.I.

Read more on Page 14

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Police officers detain a man during looting in Concepcion, Chile, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010. A 8.8-magnitude earthquake hit Chile early Saturday.

Associated Press

Chile troops, police attack post-earthquake looting

EVA VERGARA
MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press Writers

CONCEPCION, Chile (AP) — Rescuers found

signs of life in the wreckage of a 15-story building Monday as the world offered aid to victims of an earthquake that killed more than 700 people.

Read more on Page 6

Survey: 26 pct of Americans get news via cellular phone

By ANDREW VANACORE
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — Just over a quarter of American adults now read news on their cell phones, according to a new report from the Pew Research Center. The survey results being released by the group Monday offer another sign of how people are changing the way they get information. Technology has been reshaping the news business and the way consumers relate to it for more than a decade. The latest shift is being driven by the exploding popularity of phones that can easily access the Internet.

The new study found that 26 percent of Americans get news on their phones. Pew doesn't have comparable data for say, two or three years ago.

Continued on Page 3



In this Nov. 21, 2008 file photo, a customer tries the new BlackBerry Storm smartphone at Best Buy in Mountain View, Calif.

Associated Press

Europe storm death toll at 62; France hardest hit

JENNY BARCHFIELD

Associated Press Writer

PARIS (AP) — Thousands of firefighters and other rescue workers searched house by house Monday along France's devastated Atlantic coast, trying to help those still stranded by a storm that smashed sea walls and killed at least 62 people across western Europe.

The storm, called Xynthia, blew into France early Sunday with hurricane-force winds, flooding ports, destroying homes and leaving 1 million households without electricity. It also battered Belgium, Portugal, Spain and parts of Germany and snarled train and air travel throughout the continent.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy toured the worst-hit areas Monday, the coastal regions of Vendee and Charente-Maritime, and pledged €3 million (\$4 million) in emergency aid.

Regional officials clamored for France to quickly reinforce its aging sea walls. About half the French death toll of 51 was attributed to the breach of the sea wall off the coastal town of L'Aiguillon-sur-Mer, where ocean waters surged up to the roofs of some homes.

The spokesman for France's emergency services, Lt. Col. Patrick Vailli, said nine other people were still missing and scores more were wounded.

Continued on Page 7

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Desserts to blame for Obama's higher cholesterol



President Barack Obama returns to the White House from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., following a medical exam, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010, in Washington. The 48-year-old commander-in-chief signaled a thumbs-up when asked about his health.

NATASHA T. METZLER
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — Poll results, congressional head counts

Associated Press
and U.S. government deficits are not the only numbers President Barack Obama has to worry about. Now, he's trying to walk off a marginally

high cholesterol count. Although Obama took the presidential motorcade to a speech Monday morning, he decided to walk back to the White House through a park. A day earlier, his doctor recommended that he lower his cholesterol. The president told reporters he needed to "make sure that I'm walking off some of that cholesterol. That's a year of campaigning right there." Obama had a physical exam Sunday morning and learned that his total cholesterol and so-called bad, or LDL, cholesterol had both spiked into the borderline high range since his last reported exam in 2007. The culprit, according to White House spokesman Robert Gibbs, is too many cheeseburgers and desserts, a surprising revelation given Obama's reputation as a health nut. "You guys thought he carried arugula

in his pocket to snack on," Gibbs joked with reporters Monday. Gibbs chalked up the president's sweet tooth to easy access now that Obama has a kitchen staff and a pastry chef at his disposal. "If it's more available, you're more likely to eat it," Gibbs said, adding that the president remains a big fan of the pastry chef and hasn't ordered a menu change at the White House. Sunday's physical, Obama's first as commander-in-chief, also revealed that the president hasn't kicked his smoking habit. Obama has talked about his struggles to quit smoking in the past, and Gibbs said the president does occasionally fall off the wagon. Still, Gibbs said Obama is aware of the example he sets for America's youth. "He understands that what he struggles with is not a good thing for his children to see or anybody's children to see," Gibbs said. □



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CELLULAR PHONE

Continued from Font Page

But evidence of the shift in habits can be seen in this finding: Younger cell phone owners are more likely to look for news on their phones. About 43 percent of those under 50 said they are mobile news consumers, compared with 15 percent of older respondents. Still, some things don't change. Readers' No. 1 concern when they look for news on their phones: the weather. Of the 37 percent of cell phone owners who said they use the Internet on their phone, 72 percent said they check weather reports. Current events came in second with 68 percent.

Pew's survey offered a wide range of statistics on people's news habits. It showed people are not relying on one medium. Just shy of 60 percent of respondents get news from both online and offline sources. And 46 percent said they use four to six different types of media on a typical day.

The Web is also helping to turn the news into more of a social experience: More than 80 percent of respondents get or receive news via e-mailed links.

The results were based on telephone interviews with 2,259 people over the age of 18, conducted between Dec. 28 and Jan. 19. For questions to that entire group, the margin of error was 2.3 percentage points. On questions to just Internet users, the margin was 2.7 percentage points. □

SeaWorld workers describe speed of fatal attack

By **MATT SEDENSKY** and **TRAVIS REED**

Associated Press Writers

MIAMI — A killer whale that dragged a trainer to her death eluded SeaWorld workers who furiously unfurled nets while it swam pool-to-pool during the attack last week, according to witness statements released Monday. After minutes of frenzied work to save Dawn Brancheau, the whale was finally corralled but still refused to unclench its teeth and let go of her body, according to the investigative reports released by the Orange County Sheriff's Office. Investigators have said before that Brancheau died from multiple traumatic injuries and drowning. "The whale would not let us have her," another trainer, Jodie Ann Tintle, told investigators after the Wednesday attack. In the investigative reports, Brancheau's co-workers describe the swiftness of the attack and the furious response that came after alarms sounded around the pool. Employees who were at other pools, behind computers or emptying coolers of fish rushed to the scene. The reports released Monday include the first extensive accounts from employees who witnessed the attacks at

the park in Orlando.

Jan Topoleski, whose job is to monitor trainers' safety during shows, told investigators he saw Brancheau lying on the deck face-to-face with the 22-foot-long, 12,000-pound whale and communicating with him right before the attack. He said the whale, named Tilikum, bit Brancheau's hair and pulled her into the pool in a span of about two seconds. He sounded an alarm and grabbed safety equipment. Susanne De Wit, a 33-year-old tourist from the Netherlands, told investigators her group had just walked to a window for a photo when she saw the attack. The attack occurred in front of about 20 visitors who had stuck around after a noontime show.

"Suddenly I saw (the whale) grabbing the trainer ... and pulling her down in



A SeaWorld trainer performs with a killer whale during the first show after an orca killed a trainer at theme park three days earlier in Orlando, Fla., Saturday, Feb. 27, 2010.

Associated Press

the water," she said. "It was scary. He was very wild, with the trainer still in the whale's mouth, the whale's tail was very wild in the water."

Tanner Grogan, who scrambled to help other employees unfurl nets to isolate Tilikum, said the whale at one point let go for

several seconds, but snatched Brancheau again by the foot before anyone could react. The plastic, weighted nets — similar to temporary fencing used at construction sites — were unrolled and dropped in the water to help direct the whale to a pool with a hydraulic lift. □

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2,000 transportation workers idled over impasse



In this July 29, 2009 file photo, Sen. Jim Bunning, R-Ky. takes part in a Senate Banking Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington. Two thousand federal transportation workers will be furloughed without pay on Monday, and the Obama administration said they have the Kentucky senator to blame for it.

Associated Press

By **STEPHEN OHLEMACHER**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Jobless benefits suddenly ended for some laid-off workers, Medicare payments to doctors were delayed and 2,000 federal transportation workers were sent home Monday in a spending dispute tinged with election-year politics.

Democrats seized on the impasse to portray Republicans as obstructionists willing to block popular programs that create jobs and provide relief to the unemployed. Adding its voice to the flap, the White House said it was trying to “shame” Republican Sen. Jim Bunning of Kentucky for single-handedly blocking the \$10 billion extension.

In fact, it appeared the spat would have little impact on ordinary Americans because lawmakers expect to resolve the dispute this week.

But in the meantime, 41 highway projects were to be shut down because federal inspectors were off the job, and the Obama administration ordered Medicare billing contractors not to pay any claims from doctors for the first 10 business days of March. Most laid-off workers receiving unemployment benefits won’t be affected — unless the impasse drags on — but those seeking payment extensions won’t be able to obtain them.

“Six times last week, Democrats asked to extend their unemployment benefits for a short time while they work on a longer extension. Six times, Republicans said no,” said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. “The Republicans in the Senate are standing between these families and the help they need while these benefits expire.”

Republicans have been largely silent on the impasse, with several defending Bunning’s right as a senator to slow the legislation, but none offering full-throated support. Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, said Bunning correctly argues that the bill ought to be paid for, but he predicted it would pass.

Bunning, who is not seeking re-election, has single-handedly held up a bill since Thursday that would extend the programs for 30 days. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs called out Bunning on Friday and Monday, saying, “Sometimes even using their names doesn’t

create the shame that you would think it would.”

Bunning said he opposed the extension because it would add to the budget deficit, already projected to hit a record \$1.56 trillion this year. Bunning proposed to pay for the extension with unspent money from last year’s massive economic recovery package, but Democrats objected.

The House passed the short-term extension Thursday while lawmakers consider how to address the issues long-term. Senate Democrats repeatedly tried to follow suit — they kept the Senate in session until nearly midnight Thursday — but Bunning was able to block the bill under Senate rules that enable a single senator to slow the process.

The bill would extend unemployment payments to laid-off workers and provide them with subsidies to help pay health premiums through the COBRA program. It would extend funding for highway projects and spare doctors from a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments. It would extend a small business loan program, the National Flood Insurance Program and the copyright license used by satellite television providers.

Furloughs will affect employees at the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said construction workers will be sent home from job sites because federal inspectors must be furloughed.

The Medicare cuts come from a 1990s deficit reduction measure that Congress has routinely waived over the years. Medicare payments to doctors would be cut by 21 percent, if Congress doesn’t act.

Most people already receiving extended unemployment benefits won’t be affected by the impasse. But in the unlikely event that the impasse lasts through March, about 1.1 million people would lose benefits.

Senators said more than 1 million rural television viewers would not be able to watch local stations on their satellite systems without an extension. □



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Suspect in Elizabeth Smart case deemed competent

MIKE STARK
PAUL FOY

Associated Press Writers

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)

— Brian David Mitchell, the man charged with snatching then-teenager Elizabeth Smart nearly eight years ago, could finally face a jury after a federal judge ruled Monday that Mitchell was faking mental illness and is competent to stand trial.

Smart was 14 when she was kidnapped from her Salt Lake City bedroom in 2002. She was found nine months later walking a suburban Salt Lake City street with Mitchell and his now-estranged wife, Wanda Barzee.

“The evidence proves that Mitchell has the capacity to assist his counsel in his defense and the ability to behave appropriately in the courtroom,” U.S. District Judge Dale Kimball wrote in his 149-page ruling issued in response to a 10-day hearing last year on Mitchell’s competency.

Lawyers for Mitchell said his hallmark disruptive singing in court was evidence he’s mentally incompetent.

Kimball, however, called the outbreaks a “contrivance” used by the suspect to give the impression he can’t control his behavior.

“Although the defense has suggested that Mitchell’s singing is a psychotic response to stress, Mitchell has repeatedly demonstrated that he has the capacity to be composed and in control, even in stressful situations,” the judge wrote.

Elizabeth Smart’s father, Ed Smart, said he was thrilled Mitchell was found competent.

“Because he is competent; he’s crazy like a fox,” Ed Smart said.

He didn’t think his daughter, who is serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Paris, had heard the news.

Mitchell’s federal public defender Robert Steele took issue with the ruling while acknowledging it was a “close call.”

Steele said an appeal wasn’t likely to succeed, and he was instead preparing for a trial expected to start later this

year.

“It is our firm conviction that Mr. Mitchell is certainly mentally ill,” Steele said. “Therefore, we are prepared to go to trial with an extremely mentally ill client.”

The ruling was a leap forward in a case that languished in state court as a judge twice ruled Mitchell incompetent and refused to force him to be medicated. The U.S. attorney’s office intervened in 2008, indicting Mitchell in federal

court on charges of kidnapping and unlawful transportation of a minor across state lines.

A March 26 hearing was scheduled to set a trial date.

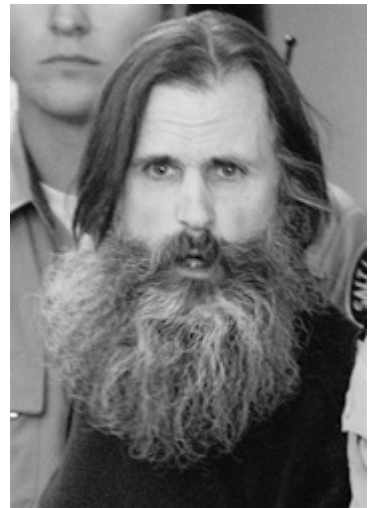
Smart, now 22, testified in October as part of the competency hearing, saying she was raped after a marriage ceremony staged by Mitchell and repeatedly throughout her captivity.

Barzee, 64, pleaded guilty in November to federal charges of kidnapping and unlawful

transportation of a minor across state lines. Last month, she pleaded guilty in state court to a charge related to the attempted kidnapping of Smart’s cousin. Prosecutors dropped other state charges against her. □

In this Dec. 18, 2006 file photo, Brian David Mitchell, the alleged kidnapper of Elizabeth Smart, enters court for his competency hearing in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press



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Chile troops, police attack post-earthquake looting



People reach for goods thrown from a supermarket window during looting in Concepcion, Chile, Monday, March 1, 2010. Security forces said they arrested dozens of people for violating an anti-looting curfew Monday after an 8.8-magnitude earthquake struck central Chile early Saturday.

Associated Press

**EVA VERGARA
MICHAEL WARREN**

Associated Press Writers

CONCEPCION, Chile (AP)

— Rescuers found signs of life in the wreckage of a 15-story building Monday as the world offered aid to victims of an earthquake that killed more than 700 people. Looters

roamed the streets even after troops and police arrested dozens of people for violating a curfew.

The toll of dead rose to 723, with 19 others missing, the National Emergency Office announced, in a magnitude-8.8 quake that President Michelle Bachelet called “an

emergency without parallel in Chile’s history.”

Some coastal towns were almost obliterated — first shaken by the quake, then slammed by a tsunami that carried whole houses inland and crushed others into piles of sticks. Shocked survivors were left without power, water or food.

In Concepcion, the biggest city near the epicenter, rescuers heard the knock of trapped victims inside a toppled 70-unit apartment building and began to drill through thick walls to reach them, said fire department Commander Juan Carlos Subercaseux.

Only the chop of military helicopters flying overhead broke the silence demanded by rescuers straining to hear signs of life inside the building. Firefighters had already pulled 25 survivors and nine bodies from the structure.

Mayor Jacqueline van Rysselberghe told Radio Cooperativa that some food aid was arriving in the city of 200,000 Monday for distribution to the hungry.

Electricity was still out, however, water was scarce and looters re-emerged at dusk despite beefed up security. Dozens of people sacked stores selling food, clothing and drugs, fleeing when police appeared to drive them away. Some struck gas stations, stealing cash from attendants. As a small military convoy of drove down the main avenue, bystanders applauded and shouted, “Finally! Finally!”

Concepcion police chief Eliecer Soler said officers arrested 55 people for violating a nighttime curfew imposed after looters sacked nearly every market in town Sunday. Troops ordered into the city by Bachelet patrolled to enforce security. A few looters re-emerged to rob a

market on Monday.

Spanish professor Eduardo Aundez watched with disgust as a soldier patiently waited for looters to rummage through a downtown store, then lobbed two tear gas canisters into the rubble to get them out.

“I feel abandoned” by authorities, he said. “We believe the government didn’t take the necessary measures in time, and now supplies of food and water are going to be much more complicated.”

The U.N. said Monday that it would rush aid deliveries to Chile after Bachelet appealed for international aid. U.N. humanitarian spokeswoman Elisabeth Byrs said Chile was seeking temporary bridges, field hospitals, satellite phones, electric generators, damage assessment teams, water purification systems, field kitchens and dialysis centers.

“We are prepared to provide assistance,” Byrs told The Associated Press in Geneva. “It could be quite fast, given that our experts are on standby and were alerted in the region.”

The World Health Organization said it expected the death toll to rise in the coming days as communications improve. For survivors, it said access to health services will be a major challenge and noted that indigenous people living in adobe homes were most at risk from heavily damaged infrastructure.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton also offered to provide disaster aid. Traveling in Uruguay, Clinton said she would bring some communications equipment when she visits Chile on Tuesday.

Argentina said it was sending six aircraft loaded with a field hospital, 55 doctors and water treatment plants.

Bachelet ordered troops to

help deliver food, water and blankets and clear rubble from roads, and she urged power companies to restore service first to hospitals, health clinics and shelters. Field hospitals were planned for hard-hit Concepcion, Talca and Curico.

Bachelet also ordered authorities to quickly identify the dead and return them to their families to ensure “the dignified burials that they deserve.”

Defense Minister Francisco Vidal acknowledged the navy made a mistake by not immediately activating a tsunami warning after the quake hit before dawn Saturday. Port captains in several coastal towns did, saving what Vidal called hundreds of lives.

Thirty minutes passed between the quake and a wave that inundated coastal towns, leaving behind sticks, scraps of metal and masonry houses ripped in two. A beachside carnival in the village of Lloca was swamped in the tsunami. A carousel was twisted on its side and a Ferris wheel rose above the muddy wreckage.

Officials said at least eight people died and eight were missing on Robinson Crusoe Island, where it the tsunami drove the sea almost 2 miles into the town of San Juan Bautista.

Efforts to determine the full scope of destruction were undermined by an endless string of terrifying aftershocks that turned more buildings into rubble — and forced thousands to set up tents in parks and grassy highway medians.

“If you’re inside your house, the furniture moves,” said Monica Aviles, pulling a shawl around her shoulders to ward off the cold as she sat next to a fire across the street from her apartment building. □



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EUROPE STORM

Continued from Front Page

The storm also caused six deaths in Germany — including a 2-year-old boy who drowned after he was blown into a river. Three people were dead in Spain, and Belgium and Portugal had one fatality each. In the southwestern French town of La Faute sur Mer, firefighters evacuated

stranded residents by boat Monday and car roofs just peeked out above the floodwaters. At Ile de Re, near La Rochelle, broken-off boulders from a shattered sea wall lay strewn about the beach.

France's railways had major delays, and cancellations continued Monday at Frankfurt airport — one of Europe's most important



Partial view of the sea wall that protects the northern part of the Ile de Re island, near La Rochelle, western France, Monday March 1, 2010, the wall was broken by Sunday's deadly storm that hit most part of France. The storm, named Xynthia, was the worst in France since 1999 when 90 people died. Prime Minister Francois Fillon held an emergency cabinet meeting and afterward called the storm a "national catastrophe."

NATO warship sinks pirate ship off Somalia

SLOBODAN LEKIC

Associated Press Writer

BRUSSELS (AP) — A NATO destroyer has sunk a pirate mothership in the Indian Ocean off the Somali coast after allowing the crew to leave, the alliance said Monday. Shona Lowe, an anti-piracy spokeswoman, said the HDMS Absalon — the Danish flagship of the three-vessel NATO flotilla in the region — disrupted a pirate operation by "scuttling" one of the large boats used by Somali gangs to transport attack teams to piracy hunting areas far off the coast.

The mothership was fired on and sunk after its crew members were transferred to a smaller boat in tow, which was allowed to return to the mainland, she said.

"NATO is not in the business of firing at skiffs with pirates in them," Lowe said in an interview from NATO's naval headquarters in Northwood, near London.

Lowe said no further details were immediately available.

The action occurred Sunday in the Indian Ocean, rather than the adjacent Gulf of Aden where most pirate attacks take place.

Piracy in the region soared as the rule of law crumbled in Somalia and organized criminal gangs ramped up the lucrative business of boarding ships in the Gulf of Aden or the Indian Ocean — one of the world's busiest sea lanes — and holding them, their crews and cargos for ransom.

The Somali government, besieged by an Islamic insurgency, does not have the forces to neutralize the pirate bases that flourish along its 1,900-mile coastline.

NATO maintains a three-ship flotilla — which also includes the frigates USS Boone and the British HMS Chatham — to fight the pirates. The European Union has a separate, six-ship squadron in the region as part of its anti-piracy mission known as Operation Atalanta, as do other nations such as the United States, India, Russia, and China.

The 6,300-ton Absalon, commissioned in 2007, serves as the flagship of the NATO flotilla. It arrived off Somalia in January. □

hubs.

Sarkozy flew over the worst-flooded areas and met with locals in L'Aiguillon-sur-Mer, promising to quickly channel recovery funds.

"It is a national disaster, a human drama with a terrible death toll," Sarkozy said. "The urgent thing is to support the families who have members missing or dead."

The French leader also tried

to staunch a storm of criticism over the state of the country's sea walls, saying "this is not the time." One official noted just how old some sea walls were. "The sea wall that broke dated from (the era) of Napoleon," Philippe de Villiers, a far-right politician who heads the regional government in Vendee, told France-Info. "Either we build (new) sea walls, in which

case they need to be taller and taller ... or we have to build further" inland. In Portugal's Azores islands, a flash flood swept a school bus off a road. The driver and one child are missing on Sao Miguel, one of the archipelago's nine islands.

The Azores islands lie 900 miles west of mainland Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean. □

Associated Press

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Al-Qaida growing in strength and numbers in Africa

LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Al-Qaida's terror network in North Africa is growing more active and attracting new recruits, threatening to further destabilize the continent's already vulnerable Sahara region, according to U.S. defense and counterterrorism officials.

The North African faction, which calls itself Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), is still small and largely isolated, numbering a couple hundred militants based mostly in the vast desert of northern Mali. But signs of stepped-up activity and the group's advancing potential for growth worry analysts familiar with the region.

The rapid recent rise of the al-Qaida group in Yemen — which spawned the Christmas airliner attack — is seen by U.S. officials and counterterrorism analysts as evidence that the North African militants could just as quickly take on a broader jihadi mission and become a serious threat to the U.S. and European allies.

The Mali-based militants have yet to show a capability to launch such foreign attacks, but are widening their involvement in kidnapping and the narcotics trade, reaping profits that could be used to expand terror operations, officials and analysts said.

Several senior U.S. defense and counterterrorism officials spoke about AQIM on condition of anonymity to discuss internal analysis. Those advances have set off alarms within the counterterrorism community, which watched as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula quickly transformed over the past year from militants preoccupied with internal Yemeni strife to a potent group recruiting and training insurgents for terror missions inside the U.S.

That threat was underscored by the failed Christmas



In this April 18, 2003, file photo a girl walks past a wall with graffiti about the al-Qaida network in a Muslim area of the northern city of Kano, Nigeria. Al-Qaida's terror network in North Africa, which calls itself Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), is growing more active and attracting new recruits, and threatening to further destabilize fragile governments of heavily-Islamic North Africa, according to U.S. defense and counterterrorism officials.

Associated Press

airliner attack, which officials say was planned and directed by Yemeni insurgent leaders. A key fear is that as AQIM expands, its criminal and insurgent operations will continue to destabilize the fragile governments of heavily Islamic North Africa, much as it has in Mali. The Maghreb includes the North African nations of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania.

As a result, the U.S. has been working to boost poverty-stricken Mali's defenses. Last year, the U.S. gave \$5 million in new trucks and other equipment to its security forces, and Pentagon funds also have been approved to provide training.

But others suggested that non-military aid is also needed.

"For too long, al-Qaida's growth in this critical region of Africa has been overlooked," said Sen. Russ Feingold, a Democrat, on Monday. "Our embassy presence in many of these countries is quite limited, which handicaps our ability to better understand a region that has become a terrorist safe haven. We need a greater non-military, on-the-ground

presence devoted to this part of the world in order to better understand local dynamics, identify emerging threats and prevent future attacks."

Several senior U.S. defense and counterterrorism officials spoke about AQIM on condition of anonymity to discuss internal analysis. Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution Saban Center and a former CIA officer, said that the North African terror group has a larger area to operate in and a wider Islamic population pool to draw from, but has not launched the kind of large-scale attacks initially feared when it became an al-Qaida affiliate three years ago.

"Now, if it is beginning to reorganize, recruit and develop, because of this international potential, it could become a much more dangerous threat," Riedel said. "And if there is a role model in al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, that is very disturbing."

Born as an Algerian insurgency in the early 1990s, the group was largely defeated and driven into a swath of ungoverned desert land — about the size of

France — in northern Mali. In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the group reached out to al-Qaida in an effort to survive. AQIM was officially recognized as an al-Qaida affiliate by Osama bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, on the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks against the U.S. Both the U.S. and the European Union have designated AQIM a terrorist organization.

The group has since absorbed some of al-Qaida's techniques for roadside bombs and suicide attacks. Occasionally it has issued videos and statements on jihadi Internet forums.

In December 2007, for example, the group attacked the U.N.'s Algerian headquarters, killing 37 people, including 17 U.N. staff members.

At the same time, AQIM has increased its recruiting efforts, drawing insurgents from Mauritania, Nigeria and Chad, officials said. The recruits are trained in small arms and roadside bomb construction, officials said, then return to their home countries to plan and execute attacks.

The spike in recruiting and

training, along with the increase in kidnappings and other crimes, has made the region more insecure and unstable in just a year, several officials said.

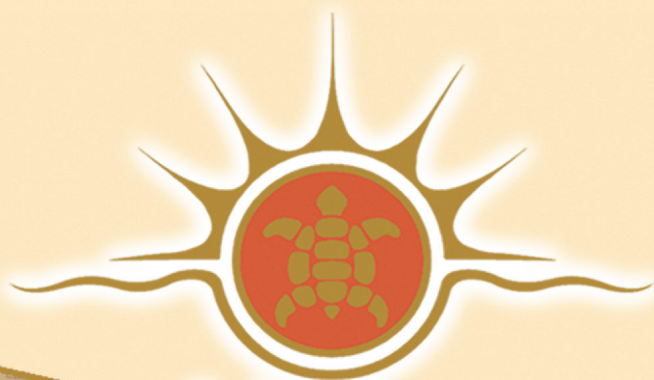
The militants often partner with local criminals, who kidnap tourists then sell them to AQIM, which then demands ransoms, officials said. Those alliances cement contacts between the criminal groups and AQIM, broadening its reach and membership.

The kidnappings have had mixed results. Last week, the group released French hostage Pierre Camatte after holding him for three months. The move was spurred by a Mali court decision that released four jailed AQIM members.

Some hostages have been killed — including Edwin Dyer, a British tourist who was captured with three others including two U.N. envoys. Britain had refused to pay ransom to the group. So far, the group has not moved beyond kidnappings to push al-Qaida's global jihad aims, creating tensions between the offshoot organization and core al-Qaida leaders in Pakistan, said Haim Malka, deputy director for the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Middle East program.

"They have not yet become more globally focused, they've stayed in the Sahara region and they've failed to make inroads in other parts of North Africa," he said. Malka cautioned that the group's broadening efforts to work with local criminal networks on kidnappings may give the appearance that it is expanding more than it actually is.

Despite the group's limited reach, British and American authorities have issued strong warnings against travel to northern Mali, saying there is a "high threat from terrorism" and from criminal acts and kidnappings. □



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Uruguay inaugurates ex-rebel leader as president

RAUL O. GARCES,
Associated Press Writer

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (AP) — A former guerrilla leader who won the trust of voters with his homespun manner and promises to govern as a conciliator became Uruguay's new president Monday.

Jose Mujica, 74, is the second consecutive leftist president in a country which, until 2005, had been ruled by right-wing parties or the military for 150 years.

He took the oath administered by his wife — also a former guerrilla leader — while wearing a blue suit and no tie, an accessory he says he will shun as president, in keeping with the flower farm owner's gruff, anti-politician image.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was among dignitaries attending the inauguration. Mujica, who helped found the National Liberation Movement-Tupamaros that carried out bombings, kidnappings and robberies

to overthrow elected governments in the 1960s, says he now rejects the "stupid ideologies" of the past. He promises to deepen the policies of popular outgoing President Tabare Vazquez, who tried to control public spending while using revenue from income tax to lower unemployment and provide equal access to health care to everyone under 18.

Uruguay was one of the few Latin American countries whose economy grew last year.

Mujica, who was elected in November, has also promised to promote Latin American unity, and his victory was widely welcomed in a region of prickly relations between some leftist and conservative governments. "I wish to not only congratulate the president-elect and the new government, but to applaud the way in which the government is unifying and bringing together even opposition parties," Clinton

said at a news conference before the inauguration. "Indeed, Uruguayans are rightly proud of their leaders and their democracy."

Mujica urged reconciliation between conservative Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and Venezuela's leftist Hugo Chavez, whose bitter spat at summit in Mexico last week marred efforts to create a new Latin American political bloc.

Chavez and Uribe both attended Mujica's inauguration, with Uribe saying he expected excellent relations with Uruguay's new leftist government.

During his campaign, Mujica insisted he would not try to emulate Chavez's efforts to install a radical socialist state, saying he was inspired instead by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's centrist policies. At a recent event, Mujica encouraged 1,500 foreign businessmen to invest in Uruguay, promising they "would not be weighed down by taxes or confiscations."



Uruguay's president-elect Jose Mujica speaks during a press conference in Montevideo, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010. Mujica will take office on Monday.

Associated Press

Mujica helped found the Tupamaros, one of many Latin American leftist rebel groups inspired by the Cuban revolution in the 1960s to fight U.S.-backed right-wing governments. Convicted of killing a policeman in 1971 — a crime he denies committing — he endured torture and solitary confinement during nearly 15 years in prison. Mujica has said the experience cured him of any illusion that armed revolution can achieve lasting social change.

He and his wife, Lucia Topolansky, now a senator, spent a quarter century transforming the Tupamaros

into a legitimate political movement that is now the driving force behind the coalition of parties that backed his campaign.

Clinton spoke to some leaders at the ceremony but not with Chavez or Bolivia's Evo Morales, another strong critic of U.S. influence in the region. Clinton said she did not try to avoid them.

"I was in the balcony, they were on the floor and I went one way and they went the other way," she told reporters on her plane later. "But I would have been more than happy to say hello to everybody who was there." □

Publisher halts book about bombing of Hiroshima



FILE - In this Feb. 26, 2007 file photo, author Charles Pellegrino is shown during a news conference in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens, file)

By **HILLEL ITALIE**,
AP National Writer

NEW YORK – Publication has been halted for a disputed book about the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945, The Associated Press has learned.

Charles Pellegrino's "The Last Train from Hiroshima" had received strong reviews and had been optioned for a possible film by "Avatar" director James Cameron.

But publisher Henry Holt and Company, responding to questions from the AP, said

Monday that Pellegrino "was not able to answer" several concerns, including whether two men mentioned in the text actually existed.

"It is with deep regret that Henry Holt and Company announces that we will not print, correct or ship copies of Charles Pellegrino's 'The Last Train from Hiroshima,'" the publisher said in a statement issued to the AP.

Doubts were first raised about the book a week ago after Pellegrino acknowledged that one of his interview subjects had falsely claimed to be on one of the planes accompanying the Enola Gay, from which an atom bomb was dropped by the United States on Hiroshima in 1945. Holt had initially promised to send a corrected edition.

But further doubts about the book emerged.

The publisher was unable to determine the existence of a Father Mattias (the first name is not given) who supposedly lived in Hiroshima at the time of the bombing, and John MacQuitty, identified as a Jesuit scholar presiding over Mattias' funeral "I read a number of books on

this period of time and none of them mentioned Mattias or MacQuitty. I knew there was no way those people could have been omitted if they were real," said history professor Barton Bernstein of Stanford University.

Pellegrino's own background was also questioned. He sometimes refers to himself as Dr. Pellegrino, and his Web site, <http://www.charlespellegrino.com>, lists him as receiving a Ph.D. in 1982 from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. But in response to a query from the AP, the school said it had no proof that Pellegrino had such a degree.

"It is easy to understand how even the most diligent author could be duped by a source, but we also understand that opens that book to very detailed scrutiny," according to the statement from Holt.

"The author of any work of nonfiction must stand behind its content. We must rely on our authors to answer questions that may arise as to the accuracy of their work and reliability of their sources. Unfortunately, Mr. Pellegrino was not able to answer the additional questions that have arisen about his book to our satisfaction."

E-mail and phone messages left with Pellegrino were not immediately answered. Cameron's office had no immediate comment.

Holt publicist Nicole Dewey said 18,000 copies of the book, published in January, were in print. The publisher "will issue full credit to wholesalers and retailers who wish to return the book. Consumers who seek a refund should return to the retailer from whom they purchased the book," Monday's statement said.

As of Monday afternoon, "Last Train" was ranked at 244 on the Amazon.com best-seller list. According to Nielsen BookScan, which tracks around 75 percent of industry sales, the book has sold 7,000 copies.

The book's fate not only means the likely demise of the film deal with Cameron, who provided a blurb for "Last Train," but complicates the long history of collaboration between the director and Pellegrino, who served as an adviser for "Avatar," the box-office champ that has been nominated for nine Academy Awards. □



Executive producers Ellen Rakieten (R) and Jerry Seinfeld (L) participate in a panel for the NBC show "The Marriage Ref" during the NBC Universal sessions at the Television Critics Association winter press tour in Pasadena, California January 10, 2010.

REUTERS/Phil McCarten

Seinfeld's "Marriage" gets big ratings, bad reviews

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Comedian Jerry Seinfeld's much-anticipated return to U.S. television drew bumper audiences but some scathing reviews on Monday for his new comedy game show, "The Marriage Ref."

Some 14.5 million Americans watched the debut of show on NBC on Sunday as the network ended its coverage of the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which drew more than 185 million viewers over the past 17 days.

Seinfeld, 55, who has done little TV since his beloved sitcom "Seinfeld" ended in 1998, is executive producer and occasional panelist on "The Marriage Ref," which has stars weigh-in on the light-hearted arguments of American couples.

The show is intended as one of the highlights of NBC's hastily revamped 10 p.m. schedule after it axed "The Jay Leno Show" in February in an embarrassing retreat from cheap-to-produce talk show fare in the prime-time hour traditionally seen as the home of expensive scripted drama.

Sunday's 30-minute "sneak preview" of "The Marriage Ref" featured one couple arguing about stuffing their dead dog and another about whether to put a stripper pole in their bedroom.

Alan Sepinwall of The Star Ledger called it an "ugly, unfunny, patronizing mess," while National Public Radio's Linda Holmes called it "painfully bad." Time magazine's James Poniewozik said it was "the most God-awful mishmash of a comedy-variety show" and said it had a "corny, low-rent feel."

Other reviewers were kinder and intrigued about seeing pop star Madonna, actress Tina Fey and "Desperate Housewives" star Eva Longoria-Parker in upcoming episodes.

"Perhaps foremost, 'The Marriage Ref' provides light entertainment at a time when silliness represents a balm to grim tidings elsewhere," said Daily Variety.

Entertainment Weekly's Ken Tucker was also prepared to give it a second chance, saying "Taken on its own terms, as non-scripted entertainment, 'Ref' is at the very least more fun than 'American Idol' is these days."

"The Marriage Ref" begins its regular 10 p.m. on March 4.

Meanwhile, NBC's coverage of the Vancouver games has been a boon for the network, which is bottom of the four big U.S. TV broadcasters. NBC has said it will lose about \$250 million dollars after paying a record sum for U.S. broadcasting rights to the Olympics.

When final figures are released later on Monday, the Vancouver Games is expected to be the second-most watched Winter Olympics on U.S. TV after the 1994 Lillehammer games. □

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BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Stocks rise after AIG deal, Greece bailout hopes

By STEPHEN BERNARD
and TIM PARADIS,

AP Business Writers

NEW YORK – Major stock indexes rose to their highest levels in more than a month Monday after corporate buyouts raised hopes about the economy. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 79 points. The Standard & Poor's 500 index, the basis of many mutual funds, erased its losses for the year. The Nasdaq composite index also turned positive for 2010 after a Japanese drugmaker said it was pursuing OSI Pharmaceuticals Inc. and SanDisk Corp. raised its revenue forecast.

The biggest boost for the market came from insurer American International Group Inc., which agreed to sell its prized Asian life insurance business to Britain's Prudential PLC for \$35.5 billion. It's seen as a sign of confidence in the economy when big businesses go ahead with takeovers.

AIG wants to sell the division, known as AIA Group, as part of its plan to streamline operations and repay the government. AIG had taken \$129.3 billion in government aid by the end of last year.

Stocks also rose on hope that European nations will announce a bailout deal to help Greece with its mounting debt problems. Stocks around the world have been hurt in recent months because of concerns debt problems in Greece would spread to other



FILE - In this Feb. 25, 2010 file photo, Trader Albert Young, left, studies his screens as he works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Stocks rose Monday, March 1, following AIG's biggest asset sale since being rescued by the government and reports of a new bailout package for Greece.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew, file)

countries and undermine Europe's shared currency, the euro.

European Union and Greek officials are meeting and media reports said a deal could be hammered out soon that would involve state-owned banks in Europe buying Greek government bonds.

The corporate takeovers and the possibility of some fix for Greece's problems bolstered a sense that the economy could continue to rebound. Major stock market indexes rose more than 2 percent in February for their best performance since November. Stocks have jumped in the past 12 months but investors have still been concerned that a rebound in the economy will stall.

Dave Hinnenkamp, chief executive KDV Wealth Management in Minneapolis, said the deals signal that companies are becoming more confident in the economic recovery and willing to spend some of their cash.

"They are at a point now where they can see that the light at the end of the tunnel isn't a train," Hinnenkamp said.

According to preliminary calculations, the Dow rose 78.53, or 0.8 percent, to 10,403.79, its highest close since Jan. 20.

The broader S&P 500 index rose 11.22, or 1 percent, to 1,115.71. It is now up 0.1 percent for 2010. The Nasdaq rose 35.31, or 1.6 percent, to 2,273.57. It's up 0.2 percent for the year. □

EU urges new Greek cuts

By Ingrid Melander
and Harry Papachristou

ATHENS (Reuters) – The European Union urged Greece on Monday to agree additional austerity measures within days to tackle a fiscal crisis that has shaken the euro zone and promised to help Athens overcome its debt problems. EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said after a day of talks with Greek leaders that financial markets would be convinced the country will meet its

deficit-reduction targets once they saw precise new measures. Hours after Rehn's comments, the office of Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou announced a cabinet meeting for Wednesday to "take decisions about the economy." No further details about the meeting were provided, but the announcement appeared to signal that Athens is poised to take new savings measures in the hopes of winning EU support, most likely in the form of guaranteed debt purchases. □

Gov't extends deadline for refinance program

By ALAN ZIBEL,
AP Real Estate Writer

WASHINGTON – The government is giving homeowners another year to refinance their loans under a little-used program designed to help borrowers whose homes have plummeted in value.

The Obama administration effort, known as Home Affordable Refinance Program, had been scheduled to end on June 10 but will now run out on June 30, 2011, the Federal Housing Finance Agency said Monday.

The program allows borrowers who owe up to 25 percent more than their homes are worth to refinance to lower interest rates.

It was originally projected to help 4 million to 5 million homeowners with loans owned or guaranteed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. So far, it has helped around 220,000, according to the Treasury Department.

TransUnion: Auto loan delinquencies decline in 4Q

NEW YORK – TransUnion said Monday that customers at least 60 days past due on repaying auto loans fell 6 percent during the fourth quarter compared with the same period a year earlier.

The 60-day delinquency rate on auto loans dropped to 0.81 percent. The delinquency rate was unchanged from the third quarter.

Auto loan delinquencies could be improving because of more favorable terms and deals in recent months for new cars, including the government's Cash for Clunkers program, Peter Turek, TransUnion's automotive vice president in its financial services business unit, said in a release.

The improving trends in auto loan delinquencies came as more customers fall behind on repaying mortgages and credit card debt.

The credit data provider said 6.89 percent of mortgage borrowers were at least two months behind on payments during the fourth quarter. It was the 12th straight quarter the delinquency rate rose.

The delinquency rate, which is seen as a precursor to foreclosures, was 6.25 percent during the third quarter and 4.58 percent during the final quarter in 2008.

Mortgage delinquencies and defaults remain a major problem facing the economy. A collapse in home sales and prices, as well as rising defaults, helped push the country into recession. Signs of a recovery in the market have been slow and uneven in recent months.

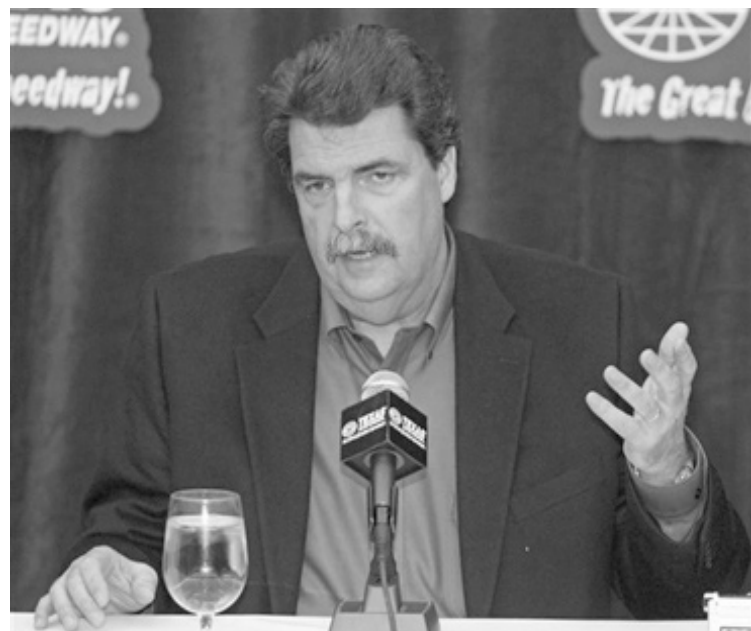
Credit card delinquencies also rose. Customers at least three months late on making a credit card payment rose to 1.21 percent during the final three months of 2009. However, average credit card debt fell to \$5,434 from \$5,729 during the same quarter a year earlier.

TransUnion tracks the data by randomly sampling 27 million anonymous consumer records every quarter from its national consumer credit database. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

NASCAR president says wings coming off soon



NASCAR Ppresident Mike Helton speaks Monday, March 1, 2010, at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Texas.

Associated Press

By STEPHEN HAWKINS

AP Sports Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas — NASCAR is finally about to lose its wings.

“We’re hoping within the next two of three races that we’ll be able to be at a point where we say it’s time to take the wings off and put the spoiler on,” NASCAR president Mike Helton said Monday.

While Helton didn’t provide a specific date for the expected removal of the wings from the cars, that timeline coincides with the March 28 race at Martinsville that most teams have expected to be the first with the more traditional-looking rear spoilers.

Speaking at Texas Motor Speedway’s media day, Helton said there was a “pretty doggone good chance” that the spoilers would be on the car when the series races at the 1 1/2-mile, high-banked track April 18. The first on-track testing of the new spoiler package was done during a tire test at Texas in January.

“I think by the time we come here in April, we can have a race or two under our belt with the spoiler,” Helton said.

There are two more Sprint Cup races before the series goes to the half-mile Martinsville, which will come only days after NASCAR’s planned open test at Charlotte. Texas is the second race after that.

Spoilers were replaced with a wing on the new car model phased in three years ago. That model has been used full-time since 2008, and fans have complained it has made races boring. NASCAR last May began a series of town hall and individual meetings with teams, and one of the constant cries from participants was a need to alter the car design.

“If the industry benefits from the fans seeing a more traditional piece and that works for us, can we mechanically do the things that the wing presents as an advantage with a spoiler?” Helton said. “During the course of research, we figured out how to do that.”

Already, NASCAR is encouraging drivers this season to be more aggressive, in large part to answer a growing fan sentiment that the sport had gone stale.

Helton knows the message is viewed partly as “NASCAR is saying that they don’t need to be such a heavy hand, they don’t need to be so regulatory.” He said drivers were told about the expected change more than a year ago and are gaining more of an understanding of the new freedom “as each

little occurrence happens” and they see how the series reacts — or doesn’t react.

Three races into the Sprint Cup season, there have already been sagging television ratings, the pothole problem at Daytona, caution lights coming on twice for no reason at Las Vegas and lower attendance at California.

Helton called the pothole at Daytona “unique” and unfortunate, something that surely affected television viewers who had the choice of flipping over to the first weekend of the Olympics during two hours of race delays.

“At the end of the day completing all 500 miles, the action in those 500 miles was indicative of what people’s expectations of the Daytona 500 were,” Helton said. “But with the Olympics as an alternative, the TV audience had a very specific direction that they could go. The longer we were down, the more difficult.”

As for the unexpected caution lights at Las Vegas, Helton said it was an electronic problem but wasn’t sure if it was caused by NASCAR or the track. Officials thought it was a fluke when it happened the first time, but turned off the electronic system after it happened the second time.

NASCAR is also apparently paying more attention to teams who enter races with no intention of trying to finish the events, the so-called “start-and-park” cars.

At Las Vegas, series spokesman Ramsey Poston said the sanctioning body will now inspect the first car that drops out of a race and wasn’t involved in an accident. It should force teams to attempt to run as many laps as possible to avoid NASCAR inspecting its motor to ensure everything is legal. □

U.S., Germany to meet in Algarve Cup final

DIRK HINRICHS

Associated Press Writer

FERREIRAS, Portugal (AP) — The United States and Germany will meet in the women’s Algarve Cup final on Wednesday after both teams secured three wins from their three group games.

Second-half substitute Lauren Cheney scored twice as the Americans beat Sweden 2-0 on Monday and finished top of Group B.

Two-time world champion Germany, meanwhile, routed China 5-0 in its last round-robin match to take top spot in Group A.

The U.S., which has won the title six times in the past nine years, also edged Norway 2-1 and defeated Iceland by the same scoreline at the weeklong tournament in southern Portugal.

The powerful Germans earlier trounced Finland 7-0 and thrashed Denmark 4-0.

Cheney got her second goal



Lauren Cheney, background, of the US, shoots to score the opening goal past Sweden’s goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl during their Algarve Cup third round soccer match Monday, March 1 2010, in Ferreiras, southern Portugal.

Associated Press

of the tournament after 56 minutes when she ran onto a pass from Casey Nogueira, rounded the goalkeeper and slotted the ball home from a tight angle.

With three minutes left to play

Cheney fired a powerful shot into the top left corner.

In the other Group B match, Norway overcame Iceland 3-2. In Group A, Denmark overcame Finland 2-1. □

Jets to release RB Thomas Jones this week

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.,
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK – The New York Jets will release running back Thomas Jones this week, allowing the leader of the NFL's top-ranked rushing offense to become a free agent.

General manager Mike Tannenbaum said Monday that the team told Jones it will cut ties with him when the league's free agency period begins Friday.

"Thomas joined us three years ago and has been a productive, passionate leader both on and off the field who has served as a positive influence for our younger players," Tannenbaum said in a statement. "We were fortunate to acquire Thomas and wish him the best."

Jones was due a \$3 million roster bonus on top of a \$2.8 million base salary this season. He and the Jets failed to reach a compromise on restructuring his contract; the team wanted him to take a pay cut.

Drew Rosenhaus, Jones' agent, didn't immediately respond to e-mails seeking comment.

Jones sat out voluntary activities last offseason while trying unsuccessfully to renegotiate his deal, which was front-loaded with \$13.1 million over the first two seasons. He made only \$900,000 in base salary last season, but didn't allow it to affect his play.

The 31-year-old is coming off a season in which he set career highs by rushing for 1,402 yards and 14 touchdowns while helping the Jets reach the AFC championship game against Indianapolis. He was also a popular presence in the locker room, twice being voted the team's most inspirational player by his teammates.

Jones had a career-high 331 carries in the regular season and appeared to wear down a bit down the stretch as rookie Shonn Greene got the majority of carries. Still, with the game on the line against San Diego and the Jets facing fourth-and-1 late, coach Rex Ryan put the ball in Jones' hands to make a first down that clinched a trip to Indianapolis.

"When I got here, Thomas immediately became one of

my guys," Ryan said in a statement. "He had one of his best years last season, might have been his best. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him as a player and a person. This is one of the tough decisions we had to make for our organization."

Jones' departure leaves Greene, the team's third-round pick last year, as the likely starter in the backfield. The Jets also anticipate having

a healthy Leon Washington, who's recovering from a broken right leg that sidelined him for the last nine games of the regular season and the playoffs. □

In this Jan. 24, 2010 photo, New York Jets running back Thomas Jones (20) carries the ball during the second half of the AFC Championship NFL football game against the Indianapolis Colts in Indianapolis.

Associated Press



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Syracuse's Scoop Jardine, right, Andy Rautins, left, and Wesley Johnson celebrate after Syracuse defeated Villanova 95-77 in an NCAA college basketball game in Syracuse, N.Y., Saturday, Feb. 27, 2010.

Associated Press

Syracuse No. 1 for the first time in 20 years

By **JIM O'CONNELL**

AP Basketball Writer

Syracuse took quite a route to its first No. 1 ranking in 20 years.

The Orange weren't in the preseason Top 25 and, just days after it was released with them in "Others Receiving Votes," they were beaten by Division II LeMoyne in an exhibition game.

But they were back in the poll — at No. 10, in fact — just two weeks into the season after impressive wins over California and North Carolina in the 2K Sports Classic.

The Orange haven't been out of the top 10 since and on Monday moved from fourth into the No. 1 spot, taking advantage of a weekend that saw the top three teams lose.

"It's a great honor, a great testament for these players, these kids, to be number one," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "We all know it doesn't matter that much in the big

picture, it's where you are at the end of the year. These kids have worked hard, been unselfish. They deserve it. They really do."

This is the third time the Hall of Fame coach has had the Orange at No. 1. There was the preseason poll in 1987-88 and a six-week stint in 1989-90.

"It's been a long time and we're happy to be there," said Boeheim, who has 826 wins in his 34th season at his alma mater.

Syracuse (27-2), which received 59 first-place votes from the national media panel, moved to the top off its 95-77 victory over then-No. 7 Villanova in front of an on-campus record crowd at the Carrier Dome.

As always, it's Syracuse's 2-3 zone defense, which it didn't use in the loss to LeMoyne, that is drawing all the attention in the rise up the polls.

"The biggest thing is that

we've been the biggest we've been inside in a long time and we just cover better. These guys have worked a little harder at it," Boeheim said. "We're also still leading the nation in field goal percentage (52.2) so we've also been a very good offensive team. They really move the ball and pass the ball extremely well. We've been good on both ends of the court. It's not one thing really."

Syracuse is the sixth team to go from unranked in the opening poll to No. 1. Kansas was the last, reaching No. 1 on Jan. 9, 1990.

"We made an unbelievable move this year and we have really played pretty consistently all year. Based on the whole year we deserve it," Boeheim said. "We may not be the best team in the country but I'm not sure who else is." Kansas, which had been No. 1 for the last four weeks and 13 polls overall this season, had the other six first-place votes and dropped to second. The Jayhawks (27-2) lost at Oklahoma State on Saturday, the same day Kentucky (27-2) lost at Tennessee.

The Wildcats, who were No. 1 for one week in January, fell one spot to third.

Texas, the fourth team to hold the No. 1 position this season, fell out of the rankings from 21st. The Longhorns became No. 1 for the first time in school history in January, but have dropped seven of 12 after their 17-0 start.

They are the fourth team to hold the No. 1 ranking and drop out of the poll in the same season — Indiana was the last to do it in 1979-80.

Duke and Kansas State each moved up one place each to fourth and fifth, while Ohio State jumped three spots to sixth. Purdue dropped from No. 3 to seventh following Sunday's 53-44 loss to Michigan State, the Boilermakers' first game since losing second-leading scorer and rebounder Robbie Hummel to a knee injury. □



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NBA Roundup

Jefferson, Spurs halt Suns' winning streak at 5

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Richard Jefferson scored 20 points in his best game since losing his starting job as the San Antonio Spurs beat Phoenix 113-110 on Sunday to end the Suns' five-game winning streak.

Amare Stoudemire had a season-high 41 points and added 12 rebounds for Phoenix, but Jefferson and the Spurs hung on late to hand the Suns only their second loss since the All-Star break.

Jason Richardson could've tied it with about 40 seconds left, but blew an uncontested dunk on a fast break.

Lakers 95, Nuggets 89

At Los Angeles, Lamar Odom scored nine of his 20 points in the fourth quarter, and Pau Gasol had 15 points and 14 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers overcame an 11-point third-quarter deficit.

Kobe Bryant was just 3 for 17 from the field, finishing with 14 points and 12 assists. The two-time scoring champion was 1 for 9 in the first three quarters.

Carmelo Anthony scored 21 points for Denver before fouling out with 2:13 to play and the Nuggets down by four.

Mavericks 108, Hornets 100

At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 36 points and Caron Butler had 19 in his return to the Dallas lineup as the Mavericks extended their

NBA-high winning streak to seven.

The Hornets had cut what had been a 25-point deficit to 101-97 after Darren Collison's 3-pointer with 2:44 left capped the rookie's stretch of eight consecutive points. But New Orleans didn't get any closer and Collison, who had a season-high 35 points, had consecutive turnovers in the final minute that Dallas turned into baskets.

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored nine of his 24 points in overtime, and Josh Smith had 22 points and 15 rebounds to help Atlanta end Milwaukee's winning streak at six.

The Bucks lost for the first time since trading for John Salmons, who finished with a season-high 32 points, including a straightaway 3-pointer that cut it to 103-102 with 9.7 seconds left in the extra period.

Jerry Stackhouse finished with 20 points in a reserve role for the Bucks, who had won six straight overall and six in a row on the road.

At Orlando, Florida, Rashard Lewis had 22 points, and Vince Carter added 17 to help Orlando overcome Dwight Howard's sub-par game.

Howard, who had 20 straight double-doubles, was in foul trouble most of the game and finished with seven points and five rebounds in 24 minutes.

Dwyane Wade, who returned

to the Heat lineup after missing four games because of a strained calf, led Miami with 21 points.

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Andray Blatche scored a career-high 36 points and had 15 rebounds, and Randy Foye hit two jumpers in the final 44 seconds for Washington.

Al Thornton added 20 points as Washington rallied from a 14-point first-half deficit to deny the Nets (6-53) their first winning streak of the season. Yi Jianlian had 20 points and a career-high 19 rebounds for New Jersey, but missed two crucial free throws in the final 1:19. Devin Harris had 18 points and 14 assists.

At Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant scored 29 points, and Nenad Krstic had a rare 3-pointer and added 16 points as Oklahoma City handed Toronto its third straight loss without All-Star forward Chris Bosh (sprained left ankle).

Jeff Green had 20 points and matched his career high with four steals for the Thunder. Andrea Bargnani and Sonny



Phoenix Suns' Amar'e Stoudemire, center, chases a loose ball between San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan, right, and Antonio McDyess during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010.

Associated Press

Weems each had 14 points to lead Toronto.

At Sacramento, California, Tyreke Evans scored 22 points to help Sacramento win consecutive home games for the first time since mid-December.

Carl Landry scored 18 points, and Spencer Hawes had 16 points and nine rebounds for Sacramento. Chris Kaman had

18 points and 11 rebounds for Los Angeles.

In other NBA games it was, San Antonio 113, Phoenix 110; L.A. Lakers 95, Denver 89; Atlanta 106, Milwaukee 102, OT; Washington 89, New Jersey 85; Oklahoma City 119, Toronto 99; Orlando 96, Miami 80; Sacramento 97, L.A. Clippers 92; and Dallas 108, New Orleans 100. □

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SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

After Canada's stirring gold, NHL returns to stage

By IRA PODELL

AP Hockey Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—A thrilling Olympic tournament capped with a golden goal.

Hockey was enjoying a sudden burst of popularity Monday, a day after Sidney Crosby lifted Canada to a 3-2 overtime victory over the United States to win the gold medal at the Vancouver Games.

The ending could not have been better for the NHL, with the U.S. and Canada in the final and Crosby's Stanley Cup champion Penguins playing U.S. goalie Ryan Miller's Buffalo Sabres on Tuesday, when most teams are back in action.

Yet the irony is that Crosby's wrist sliding under Miller might be the last Olympic memory the NHL can share.

The league has not yet agreed to stop the season again in four years to enable its players to participate in the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Two-time defending MVP Alex Ovechkin has already vowed that he will play in the games in his host country regardless of what the NHL decides.

Debate continues to rage as to what effects—both positive and negative—taking a two-week break in the heart of the season has on the NHL. It all seems good when the Olympics are held in North America and its conducive time zones for television coverage of the games, and when the gold medal game features a dream matchup.

But for every finish like this one, there is also the possibility that Sweden and Finland could fight for gold on the last day, as was the case at the 2006 Turin Olympics. And next time out, the games will be in a time zone that makes for weak television ratings in North America.

NBC said Monday that



Canada's Sidney Crosby (87) shoots past USA goalie Ryan Miller (39) for the game-winning goal in the overtime period of a men's gold medal ice hockey game at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010.

Sunday's gold medal game was the most-watched hockey game in 30 years, drawing an average viewership of 27.6 million. Not since the finals of the Americans' 1980 Miracle On Ice run, when the U.S. secured gold against Finland, had so many viewed a hockey game on American television (32.8 million).

Canada's latest golden victory was seen by 10.5 million more viewers than in 2002 when the Canadians topped the U.S. for gold at Salt Lake City—a 61 percent increase. Still, even as NHL commissioner Gary Bettman praised the Olympic tournament, there was no discussion of the future.

"The 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver served as the latest affirmation that the quality of our play—and our players—is the finest in the world. We send our Olympians

back to their NHL teams with our congratulations, appreciation and thanks for having represented their NHL teams, their league and their fans with such distinction," Bettman said in a statement.

"As every member of the gold and silver medal teams plays for an NHL club, the speed and skill of our outstanding athletes and our game remains on display as the excitement of our season resumes."

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Associated Press
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The NHL had one game scheduled Monday in its return from the 14-day Olympic break—Detroit at Colorado—with a 12-game slate on Tuesday. Matching the excitement of the Olympic tournament may be an impossible task, but the league is still headed to a key moment in the season. Teams have anywhere from 19 to 22 games left in the regular season to secure playoff spots, followed by the run to the Stanley Cup.

Miller will get a chance for a bit of redemption and revenge against Crosby. The kicker is that Miller will also be facing U.S. teammate Brooks Orpik, who now goes back to being on the same side as Sid the Kid as a Penguins defenseman. □

Addressing more attention on problematic young adults

Dutch Kingdom Ministers of Justice agree



ORANJESTAD - It is of major importance to address the issues that may lead teenagers and young adults, mostly male to become criminals. Ministers of Justice of the Kingdom met in Aruba for the bi-annual tripartite meeting where they discussed topics of common interest and how to strengthen cooperation to improve compliance with international standards. The meeting was deemed as constructive and successful. Minister of Justice of The Netherlands Antilles Magali Jacoba, Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin of The Netherlands and their host, Aruba Minister of Justice Arthur Dowers were engaged in intensive meetings here yesterday, find common ground on a number of topics, such as included improvement



of the prison systems in the Kingdom according to European human right commission standards, further expansion of and collaboration for acting against human trafficking and abuse and fortification of border control measures.

Continued on Page B3

Making A Splash At Papiamento Restaurant & Sharing Fun At Marriott

Philips Lighting Quality Improvement Competition A Big Hit

PALM BEACH – For the past three days the 2nd out of four groups of Philips Lighting North America employees (Canada, Mexico and the United States) enjoyed the island while staying at the Aruba Marriott for the Philips Lighting Quality Improvement Competition (QIC). Each group of participants presented their innovative solutions to a Philips jury all day yesterday. Congratulations to Team SOS from Salina, Kansas, who launched the winning project out of all improvements presented, earning a trip to Dublin!

There are 2 more Philips Lighting groups arriving at the Aruba Marriott on March 2nd and March 5th, participating in the same events. All groups will have the opportunity to explore all the good things Aruba has to offer by means of some culinary events including a welcome reception and lunch hosted by the Aruba Marriott Resort. The Philips QIC Award dinner on February 28th was held at Papiamento Restaurant where this group made a splash by making an after dinner jump in the restaurant's pool!

Continued on Page B4



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At the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa

Maycas Limari hosts an exciting wine summit



PALM BEACH – Wine maker Javier Villarroel, hosted the Maycas Limari Wine Summit in conjunction with the Aruba Trading company, at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa. Invited to the summit, regional

purveyors from Curacao, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia here to meet the wine-maker and his support crew, the brand manager and the export manager.

The summit's busy program included an extensive wine



tasting of the wines which achieved high ratings from Wine Spectator Magazine, Wine & Spirits Magazine and Decanter Magazine, also those scored by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate and recipients of the annual Wines of Chile Awards.

Summit participants enjoyed the culinary fireworks of the Radisson's food & beverage team, including dinner at Laguna restaurant and dinner on the Miramar lawn, served in the tropical garden, under the stars.

About the brand: In recent years Concha y Toro, Chile's largest wine company by far, has been making good wines in large volumes, and perhaps its most interesting venture is the Maycas del Limari wines, from a cool climate region in the far north of the country, that is emerging as a promising place to grow vines. Located 250 miles north of Santiago, in the rapidly unfolding Limari Valley, Concha y Toro has initiated an exciting new brand, Maycas del Limari. Maycas, means "croplands" in the indigenous Quechua language. This land was the foundation of the Inca Empire, the most powerful civilization in South America, and Limari takes its name from the Franciscan monk who first planted grapes there in 1548.

The Limari valley benefits from a strong coastal influence, which means more of the ocean breeze makes its way up into the valley, and the wines produced there



reflect the luminosity of the zone, and the minerality of the rich marine soils. Maycas del Limari wines draw their inspiration from the Inca solar calendar, prominently

displayed on each label. Pictured here summit-goers combine product knowledge with pleasure at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa





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Dutch Kingdom Ministers of Justice agree



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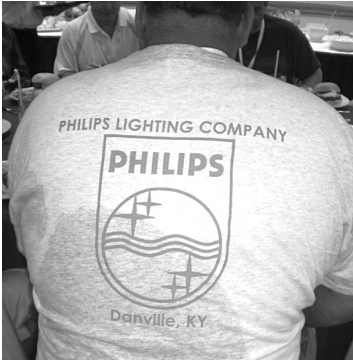
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Philips Lighting Quality Improvement Competition A Big Hit



Continued from Page B1

Daytime activities to explore the island included a Scavenger Hunt, Jeep Safari, a visit to the Natural Pool and Beach Olympic games at the Marriott. Shown here are some snap shots from participants of the Philips Lighting group sightseeing on the island, enjoying a taste of Aruba's diverse culinary offerings and twisting by the pool at Papiamento Restaurant. Safe travels home to all Philips team members leaving Aruba today!

Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino boasts 411 guestrooms – the most spacious on the island – each with large, private balconies overlooking the sparkling waters of the Caribbean Sea. On property, seven restaurants and cafes provide fare from light to elegant, while the largest casino in Aruba, a 6,500 square-foot spa, free-form swimming pool with cascading waterfalls and high-energy health club offer entertaining diversions. Luxury hotel-within-a-hotel Tradewinds Club is the newest addition to this beachfront resort. Marriott and Renaissance Caribbean & Mexico Resorts is comprised of ten resorts in seven of the top tropical destinations in the Caribbean and Mexico – Aruba, Cancun, Curaçao, Grand Cayman, Puerto Vallarta, St. Kitts and St. Thomas. □



Put your brain into overdrive

This Tuesday the Plaza Quiz Night Series continues



sponsored by Red Sail Sports, while Synergy got the brunch for five at Matthew's. The Corner Girls received 5 trays of Balashi Beer.

The Tuesday evenings at Café the Plaza in the Renaissance Marketplace have become famous by now. Lots of teams are trying to get the right mix of 'old' and 'young' people in various professions and with different hobbies to be able to answer the myriad of difficult trivia questions.

Any team can play, so come on down before 8 pm and put your brains into the overdrive mode at Café the Plaza.

Photos show the winning teams of the January/February Quiz Night Series. □



ORANJESTAD - The first Plaza Quiz Night Series of the year has hardly finished or the new 8-week series continues. This Tuesday is the start of new chances and new-found fame for those who want to wrack their brains trying to find the answers to really difficult trivia questions.

In the past series, Bier Hier was the uncontested winner, towering high above Eureka, Synergy and the Corner Girls. This team is truly something else!

Prizes for the winners were Goodie Bags courtesy of Pepia Est; these were filled with bottles of Mount Gay Rum, Jägermeister and Cointreau, shirts and glasses. Eureka chose gift certificates for a sunset sail for 5 persons,



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The Renaissance Casinos Pick Team of the Year

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were introduced to their peers as top performers during an animated cocktail party at the Renaissance Convention Center.

The party was also attended by all those who were nominated, individuals



who worked harder and smarter during 2009, and distinguished themselves with their work ethics and job knowledge including Sixta Croes Chi A Loi, Seaport Cleaner, Tirziane William, Administrator, and the assistant to the General

Manager, Mirna Ridderstap, Crystal Waitress, Owen Tromp, Seaport Casino Slot technician, Romulo Martinez, Crystal Casino Dealer, Giovanni Tromp, Ruben Diaz, and Fidel Krozendijk, all Crystal Casino Floor Supervisors,

and Clarina Dijkhoff, Assistant Cage Manager.

The party in their honor was attended by resort executives, and served as a token of appreciation for their efforts and dedication.



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R THE BOOK OF ELI				
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matinee: 12:15	3:00	late show: 11:45		
R FROM PARIS WITH LOVE				
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I went back to see the show during rehearsals, and still couldn't figure out the secret.

Tourists and local fans will remember Steinfeld for past performances, in Aruba,



and on network television, Mr. Steinfeld recently authored "the Houdini Conspiracy", aka "Houdini Lives!", a collaborated work with new england mystery writer

Al Blanchard, he believes will be turned into a feature film.

The intimate Magic Live!® theater-of-illusions showroom is located just off the lobby of the Westin-Aruba in high-rise area, j.e. irausquin boulevard 77. Palm Beach, Aruba. Magic Live!® BOX

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SEE MAGIC, comedy and "seemingly impossible feats, get ready to marvel at the all new, MAGIC! theater-of-illusions show starring ADAM STEINFELD, opens DECEMBER, 25, nightly 9PM at the WESTIN, aruba. MAGIC LIVE! theater-of-illusions show...at the WESTIN-Aruba, 9pm nightly, starring AdamSteinfeld. □



Spectacular seafood special at Driftwood

From the pier to your plate at authentic Aruban seafood restaurant

ORANJESTAD - It's happening downtown. Established Driftwood Restaurant launches a serie of spectacular and delicious seafood specials, available now.

Driftwood is specialized in fresh seafood from the Caribbean Sea and has become the favorite spot for Aruban-style seafood dishes. Fresh fish is caught daily by the owner himself and



perfectly and authentically prepared by their talented local Chef.

Located in the heart of characteristic downtown, Driftwood offers you a unique dining experience. Enjoy the freshest fish, biggest shrimp, or the most succulent Caribbean lobster amid the rustic ambience of the natural driftwood dining room.

The authentic local seafood restaurant.

The menu includes a large variety of typically Aruban delicacies including a three star fish soup and a mouth-watering filet of fish served with a mild Aruban Creole sauce... a seafood lover's dream come true.

Opening hours: every day, but Tuesdays from 5pm till 10:30pm.



Special of the month

Every month the Chef treats his customers with a delicious dinner special. In June one may choose from different soups, fish cakes or salads to start with. The main

course is a choice of catch of the day (prepared your way), Jumbo Shrimp or for the meatlovers Filet Mignon or Chicken Breast. The evening is topped with a grand dessert and coffee or tea.

Driftwood Restaurant

Klipstraat 12, Oranjestad

Reservations: **583 2515**

Email: info@driftwoodaruba.com

Website: www.driftwoodaruba.com



Special of the Month:
3-course dinner →
Appetizer - Entree - Dessert

\$24
per person



Oranjestad – The annual local Corporate Appreciation Party is always fun, but this year Ariana Santiago Gonzalez, Sales Manager and Adrian

Arends Director of Events, went all out when they offered the members of Executive Plus a disco party, a trip on board Edison Tromp's time-



machine to the 70s and 80s, as the DJ was spinning funk, Latin and soul from a glowing, psychedelic sound arena.

The party at the Renaissance Convention Center, Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino, also introduced



& the Gang. Party-goers prepared well and dressed up, raiding all boutiques in town for platform shoes, afros, shiny polyester tops, bell-bottom pants, fake gold chains, dashiki shirts on men, and blue eye-shadow with mile-long artificial lashes on ladies.

The tremendous food display featured an interactive buffet where guests could dress up their own Seafood Chowder, order sushi to their liking, live from an exhibition chef, interact with the Tempura cooks, linger at the carving station, and enjoy crepes Suzette made to order for dessert, chased by fantastic petit fours, over free flowing martinis, and premium cocktails.

Ariana Santiago Gonzalez, at the helm of the Executive Plus program promised additional incentives and points to corporate suppliers booking local business into the Renaissance properties, in 2010. □



Red Sail Sports Aruba for all sail cruises

Sail with Red Sail Sports Aruba Sunset along Aruba's scenic Coastline



PALM BEACH - Red Sail Sports' catamaran will take you on an unforgettable journey: the Mexican Dinner Sail. Your trip includes a Live Mariachi Band, Mexican Food and an open bar with Tequila, Coronitas and Margaritas. The Mexican Party Sails on Friday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Aruba's trade winds provide the ideal conditions for sailing aboard Red Sail Sports' top quality, luxurious catamarans.

Set sail and join Red Sail Sports Half Day Luncheon Snorkel Sail or the romantic Sunset Sail. Red Sail Sports also offers a Dinner Sail which combines a sail along Aruba's scenic coastline and a spectacular view of the sunset with a tantalizing buffet catered by award-winning chefs. If you want to discover Aruba's underwater world, be sure to get in touch with Red Sail Sports. Learn to dive in one



day with the Discover Scuba Dive Course, get PADI certified or join us on our daily one and two tank dives. Red Sail Sports is Aruba's lead-in dive and watersports operator. Activity desks are located at the Hyatt Regency, Marriott Resorts and on Renaissance Island.

To make reservations call 586-1603 or go to www.redsail-aruba.com. Be sure to visit one of Red Sail Sports' stores for the latest in swimwear, beach essentials, T-shirts and souvenirs.



Peggy Muzo, representing the Renaissance Curacao property, visiting Aruba in order to meet and mingle with corporate clients. The elaborate disco party

starred Michael Jackson in a surprise performance as well as the music of the Bee Gees, Donna Summer, Lionel Richie, Las Chicas del Can, the Village People and Kool



Aqua Grill... "the hip restaurant that is heaven on earth for seafood lovers," Fodor's Travel Guide



Among the island's many fine restaurants, Aqua Grill is the premier seafood sensation. Excitingly prepared in an open-view kitchen, fresh local catches join delicacies from waters abroad, including live Maine lobster, Norwegian salmon, sashimi tuna, and Alaskan king crab, along with a selection of non-seafood dishes.

Aqua Grill's award-winning chef offers a menu of classic and contemporary dishes. The fresh

seafood is prepared in a variety of regional styles, melding local island charm with the traditions of New England, the spices of Jamaica, the zesty flavors of Italy, the mystique of Indonesia, and beyond.

In addition to a selection of authentic dishes, your seafood can also be prepared wood-grilled, broiled, poached, steamed, or pan-fried upon request. Complimenting the menu is the island's

largest raw bar and a generous wine list of over one hundred selections.

Set in a contemporary decor combining the traditions of a New England fish house with the ease and character of the Caribbean, Aqua Grill's warm, island hospitality is the final ingredient to the complete dining experience on Aruba.

Open nightly from 6pm to 11pm, 5:00pm to 11:00pm on Sunday. ☐

Fun Island Living, at T.H. Palm & Company



Palm Beach -- The beautiful T.H. Palm & Company offers an exceptional, upscale shopping experience aptly described as "Fun Island Living."

Owned by long time Aruba resident Jodi Tobman who has several other boutiques on the island, Jodi reports she had a lot of fun creating this magnificent jewel of a boutique which first opened its doors in June of 2004.

A wide variety of distinctive items are on display on interesting antique décor pieces, from luscious silk tropical shirts for men to stylish resort

wear and exclusive artisan jewelry for women. The theme of "Fun Island Living" is apparent in the wide selection of accessories for home including tropical barware and serving pieces, books, artwork and lamps. There are handbags "to live for" and an array of gifts for children of all ages as well as a variety of novelty gift items for pets.

When visiting T.H. Palm & Company, we suggest you take your time as you will need to browse from floor to ceiling in order not to miss anything. Larger items can be shipped to your home address at a nominal fee and shipping is

always an available option.

For those who find it hard to choose from among all the enchanting objects in stock or for those who do not have time to shop, a Personal Shopper service is available to assist at no extra charge, by appointment, please.

T.H. Palm & Company is conveniently located in front of the Playa Linda Beach Resort and offers late night shopping and convenient parking. Open daily from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Fridays open until 11 p.m. Telephone +297 586 8909. Email: orders@salamanderholdings.com ☐

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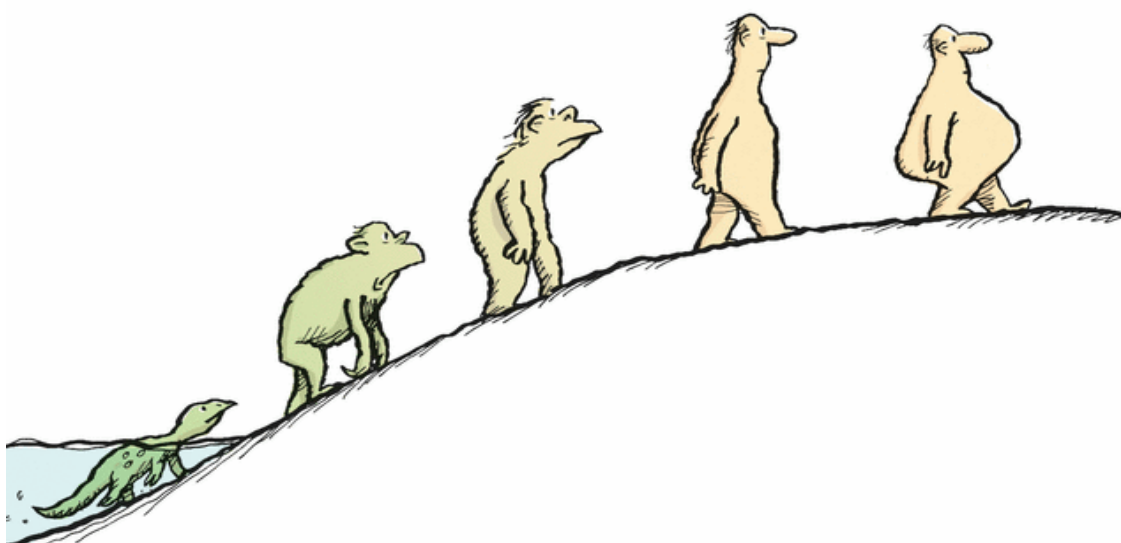
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Like Crist-Rubio for GOP, Lincoln-Halter Race Could Define Dems

John Nichols

The Nation -- Most major media in the United States has given up on covering politics as if it mattered. From talk radio to talk television to the Washington bureaus of too many of our dying newspapers, the coverage of the 2010 election cycle is framed in one of two ways:

A. A fight between conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats.

B. A fight between conservative Republicans and Tea Party Republicans to decide who will get to vanquish the liberal Democrats in November.

What's missing from this calculus is the reality that this is an exceptionally volatile moment economically, socially and politically in the United States -- a moment so volatile that both major parties are experiencing unprecedented turbulence within their ranks.

The first partisan primaries, last month in Illinois and this week in Texas, have seen intense multi-candidate contests for key nominations on both sides of the ballot. Incumbents are facing fights within their own parties, open seats are attracting contenders from all wings of the two major parties, and independent and third party contenders are waiting in the wings.

This is a year that will be packed with ideological sparring and nuanced messaging on all sides.

It is absolutely appropriate, for instance, to highlight the Florida fight between Governor Charlie Crist and former state House Speaker Marco Rubio for the Republican nomination to fill an open U.S. Senate seat representing that state. Crist is a relative moderate who has actually had a few nice things to say about President Obama and who might serve in the Senate as someone seeking bipartisan agreement; Rubio is a hardliner who errs right on every issue. Their primary contest is a great one.

But it is not the only one.

In fact, Democrats will have as many serious primary contests for House and Senate seats this year as Republicans, and perhaps more. In California, for instance, progressive leader Marcy Winograd has mounted such a serious challenge to conservative Democratic Congresswoman Jane Harman that Winograd is now being attacked by party leaders who are unsettled by the prospect that her anti-war, anti-Wall Street, pro-civil liberties candidacy might

upset the incumbent.

Similarly intense contests have developed for Senate seats in Pennsylvania and Colorado, with incumbents Arlen Specter and Michael Bennet both facing tough challenges from credible challengers. (The Pennsylvania race between Specter and Congressman Joe Sestak is less of a left-right battle, especially since Sestak has tacked well to the right on foreign policy; but the Colorado contest offers a clear choice between a corporation-friendly centrist incumbent who polls very badly and a populist challenger, former state House Speaker Andrew Romanoff, who polls far better against Republican prospects.)

Now, however, what could be the most interesting and important primary fight on the Democratic side has developed in Arkansas.

Senator Blanche Lincoln, the exceptionally uninspired (and uninspiring) Arkansas Democrat who has dragged her heels on health-care reform, labor-law reform and just about every other major issue that matters to grassroots Democrats while at the same time backing bank bailouts and trade policies that batter Arkansas workers and farmers, will face a serious primary challenge from the state's lieutenant governor.

Bill Halter, who was elected to Arkansas' No. 2 job with 57 percent of the vote in 2006, has positioned himself as a far more progressive player on education, health care and, above all, economic issues than Senator Lincoln.

That's got a frightened Lincoln trying to portray the Halter challenge as an "extremist" assault on her by the left-wing blogosphere. Halter's certainly got a lot of online backers.

MoveOn.org was quick to celebrate the "huge news" that Halter was running.

A MoveOn blast issued mid-day Monday asked:

Just how bad is Blanche Lincoln?

She promised to filibuster any health care bill that included a public option after taking more than \$866,000 from insurance and HMO interests. She's the #1 recipient of campaign contributions from Big Oil in the last year, and now she's sponsoring a bill to roll back the Clean Air Act. And she accepted more than \$1.3 million over her career from Wall Street banks and financial interests, and then voted to kill legislation that would've allowed struggling

homeowners to renegotiate their mortgages and stay in their homes.

Here's how MoveOn member Jennifer P. from Little Rock put it: "Lincoln never met a special interest she didn't like. It's hard to express just how awful she has been as a senator. I don't know of anyone who will vote for her if she shows up on the November ballot." That's why MoveOn members in Arkansas voted 92% to support Halter's campaign to replace her.

Fortunately, we've got a much better alternative. Bill Halter has a progressive record as lieutenant governor and he's willing to take on big corporations when he gets to Washington.

Bloggers Glenn Greenwald and Jane Hamsher, the co-founders of Accountability Now PAC, were just as fast in rallying their readers and allies to back Halter: "We're proud to announce our first candidate: Arkansas Lieutenant Governor Bill Halter will challenge Blanche Lincoln in the Democratic primary for her Senate seat. Lincoln is at the front of the line when it comes to using her power in the Senate to repay her corporate donors with political favors. Now's our chance to hold her accountable."

The online support should help Halter fill his coffers as he seeks to compete with the more than \$5 million -- much of it special-interest money that Lincoln has on hand for this year's race.

But Halter's is much more than an internet-generated candidacy. In fact, if it was just that it would be easily dismissed in a state where Democratic primaries are still decided county-by-county, precinct-by-precinct, by party loyalists and voters who have traditionally been cautious about taking cues from outside groups or backing candidates they do not sure "get" Arkansas. (Remember that Barack Obama fared poorly against former Arkansas First Lady Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Arkansas Democratic presidential primary, just as he lost there to Republican John McCain in the fall.) Halter's viability has everything to do with his record on the ground in Arkansas.

For instance, against the counsel of those who said the state would not take the necessary steps to expand access to higher education, Halter helped organize and then led a campaign to establish a state-run lottery that would direct all proceeds to scholarships for Arkansas citizens to attend Arkansas colleges. □



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A stand builder fixes a logo at the Google stand at the CeBit 2010 exhibition, the world's biggest high-tech fair in Hanover, northern Germany. Internet giant Google announced Monday that it had bought Picnik.com, a website that allows users to edit and store photos online.

(AFP/DDP/Ronny Hartmann)

Google buys photo editing site Picnik

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Internet giant Google announced Monday that it had bought Picnik.com, a website that allows users to edit and store photos online.

“Until recently, you had to edit your photos using client software on your computer,” Brian Axe, a Google product management director, said in a blog post.

“Today, we’re excited to announce that Google has acquired Picnik, one of the first sites to bring photo editing to the cloud,” Axe said. Financial details of the transaction were not disclosed.

Axe said Google would not be “announcing any significant changes to Picnik today, though we’ll be working hard on integration and new features.”

He said Google would “continue supporting all existing Picnik partners.”

Picnik allows users to import photos from other services such as Picasa, Flickr and Facebook.

In a blog post announcing the purchase, Picnik said it had 20 employees and receives millions of visitors a month.

“Under the Google roof we’ll reach more people than ever before, impacting more lives and making more photos more awesome,” Picnik said.

“Google processes petabytes of data every day, and with their worldwide infrastructure and world-class team, it is truly the best home we could have found,” Picnik said.

Google’s purchase of Picnik comes about three weeks after the Internet giant bought Aardvark, a “social search” service that relies on a user’s contacts to provide answers to questions.

Google chief executive Eric Schmidt said in a conference call with analysts in January that the Mountain View, California, company planned to acquire about one company a month this year. □

Leave Your PlayStation 3 Off or Else, Warns Sony

Matt Peckham

It’s probably just a 24 hour bug, but you’ll want to leave your glitchy PS3s off in the meantime, just in case, says Sony.

In an update posted to the company’s international Twitter feeds and official PlayStation blogs at roughly 9:15am PT, Sony wrote that it hopes to resolve an issue preventing gamers from playing games or connecting to its PlayStation Network, but advises that “you do not use your PS3 system, as doing so may result in errors in some functionality.”

Those “functionality errors” could include properly recording trophies obtained by completing specific goals in games, as well as “not being able to restore certain data,” though it’s unclear what Sony means by the latter. The issue, which manifested as clocks turned from February 28 to March 1, affects older “fat” PS3s only (“slims” are unaffected) and manifests as a time reset to 12/31/99 when you power the system on. Attempting to play certain games offline brings up an error message, as does signing into Sony’s PlayStation Network. Some users have also reported that they can’t access streaming videos, such as those downloaded from online video rental service Netflix. □

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Ex guerrillero José Mujica asumió la presidencia de Uruguay

Promesa de mantener una macroeconomía “ortodoxa y prolija”



El presidente actual de Uruguay, José Mujica. REUTERS/Andres Stapff

MONTEVIDEO (Reuters) - El ex guerrillero José Mujica asumió el lunes la presidencia de Uruguay con la promesa de mantener una macroeconomía “ortodoxa y prolija” y amplias políticas sociales, en el que será el segundo Gobierno consecutivo de la izquierda en el país.

Con una entusiasta multitud

en las calles enarbolando banderas uruguayas y de la coalición izquierdista Frente Amplio, Mujica hizo un llamado a un diálogo amplio entre partidos para establecer políticas de Estado y facilitar la gobernabilidad, dejando de lados los conflictos.

Tras un aplaudido discurso en el Congreso y vitoreado

por manifestantes, el nuevo presidente recorrió junto al vicepresidente Danilo Astori en un automóvil eléctrico abierto los casi dos kilómetros que separan el Palacio Legislativo de la histórica Plaza Independencia.

Emocionado, Mujica se mezcló entre la multitud que lo recibió al grito de “Uruguay, Uruguay” en el escenario donde el saliente mandatario Tabaré Vázquez le entregó la banda presidencial. Luego Mujica puso en funciones a sus ministros.

“Sería contranatura que nos dedicáramos a confrontar y no a concertar. Las batallas por el todo o nada son el mejor camino para que nada cambie y todo se estanque”, dijo Mujica poco antes en el Congreso, en un discurso largamente aplaudido por políticos de todas las fuerzas y dignatarios extranjeros.

Silvia Castro, una cocinera de 49 años dijo: “Este uno de los días más felices de mi vida. El Pepe (como Mujica es llamado) es mi revolución, desde hace muchos años es el que mejor nos representa a todos los que somos pueblo”.

El líder izquierdista de 74 años prometió un estricto manejo de la economía y un férreo control del sistema bancario, vital para Uruguay, una nación de 3,3 millones de habitantes

que vive de la agricultura, la gandería, el turismo y la inversión de no residentes.

“Una macroeconomía prolija es un prerequisite para todo lo demás (...) Vamos a ser ortodoxos en la macroeconomía y lo vamos a compensar siendo innovadores y atrevidos en otros aspectos”, dijo Mujica.

Con el estilo campechano que lo caracteriza, Mujica dijo que pasó la mañana previa a su asunción “tomando unos mates con la vieja”, en alusión a su esposa, la ex guerrillera y senadora Lucía Topolansky.

Pero, en alusión a los retos que deberá enfrentar como presidente, señaló que “hoy son todas mieles. Hoy es el cielo, mañana empieza el purgatorio”.

Entre esos desafíos, Mujica deberá buscar una solución a un dilatado conflicto ambiental con la vecina Argentina que ha dañado la relación bilateral.

SIN CORBATA

Su Gobierno también deberá atender una situación fiscal ajustada y fuertes vencimientos de deuda. Algunos analistas económicos afirman que deberá realizar un ajuste de gastos que podría afectar las amplias políticas sociales del Estado uruguayo.

“Seremos serios en los gastos, en la política fiscal, en la

política monetaria (...) seremos más que serios, seremos perros en la vigilancia del sistema financiero”, agregó el nuevo presidente, vestido con quien lucía un traje oscuro y camisa blanca, sin corbata.

A la ceremonia de jura asistieron siete mandatarios de la región, el príncipe de Asturias, Felipe de Borbón, y la secretaria de Estado estadounidense, Hillary Clinton, quien previamente se reunió con Mujica para ofrecerle cooperación en educación, tecnología, negocios, comercio e inversiones.

“Su país, presidente electo Mujica, es un modelo para muchos otros”, dijo Clinton. Mujica elogió a Estados Unidos y su presidente, Barak Obama. La jornada estuvo marcada también por la preocupación regional con la situación de Chile tras el feroz terremoto que dejó más de 700 muertos y destruyó pueblos enteros el último fin de semana.

En su discurso, Mujica criticó el actual estado de la unión aduanera Mercosur, integrada también por Brasil, Paraguay y Argentina, y pidió mayor compromiso con el bloque por parte de sus socios mayores, pero ratificó la fidelidad de Uruguay a esa asociación comercial.

Clinton ofrece ayuda de EEUU en disputa por Islas Malvinas

MONTEVIDEO (Reuters) - La secretaria de Estado estadounidense, Hillary Clinton, dijo el lunes que su país estaba preparado para ayudar a Argentina y Gran Bretaña a resolver nuevas tensiones sobre las disputadas Islas Malvinas, que provocaron una guerra entre ambos países en 1982.

“Iremos a Buenos Aires más tarde hoy (lunes), espero reunirme con la presidenta (Cristina Fernández) de Kirchner y discutir una amplia gama de temas”, dijo Clinton durante una aparición en Montevideo, donde asistió a la investidura del nuevo presidente uruguayo, José Mujica.

“Nuestra posición es que este es un asunto a ser resuelto entre el Reino Unido y Argentina. Si podemos ser de ayuda en facilitar ese esfuerzo, estamos listos para hacerlo”, declaró Clinton. Argentina ha objetado la exploración petrolera

de una empresa británica frente a las Malvinas, pero Reino Unido rechazó la queja. La oferta de ayuda de Clinton se produjo en el primer día de una gira por América Latina que la llevará a Chile, golpeado por un terremoto, y al peso pesado regional Brasil, además de Costa Rica y Guatemala.

Argentina, que ha reclamado las islas del Atlántico Sur desde que Gran Bretaña estableció su Gobierno en el siglo XIX, las invadió en 1982. Tras una guerra de dos meses, fue obligada a retirarse, pero aún reclama el archipiélago y dice que la exploración petrolera de la británica Desire Petroleum es una violación a su soberanía.

Argentina objetó formalmente la perforación y dijo que exigiría que todas las embarcaciones desde las Malvinas obtengan un permiso para atracar en Argentina. □



La secretaria de Estado estadounidense, Hillary Clinton, y miembros de su delegación dejan el encuentro con el presidente electo de Uruguay José Mujica, en Montevideo, antes de asumir la presidencia. 1 de marzo 2010 REUTERS/Carlos Pazos

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Chile busca a contrarreloj sobrevivientes tras sismo de magnitud 8,8



Un vecino barre su casa en Pelluhue, dañada tras un violento sismo que provocó olas que inundaron varias ciudades de norte a sur de Chile. Feb 28, 2010. REUTERS/Victor Ruiz Caballero



Residentes de la ciudad chilena de Concepción aguardan su turno para recibir gasolina luego de que el suministro regular quedara interrumpido por el poderoso terremoto que afectó a la región. Mar 1, 2010. REUTERS/Jose Luis Saavedra



Hombre camina en medio a escombros en Iloca, Chile. 1/3/2010. REUTERS/Eliseo Fernandez

CONCEPCION/TALCA, Chile (Reuters) - Rescatistas seguían el lunes buscando sobrevivientes en pueblos devastados por el terremoto y los tsunamis que golpearon el sur de Chile dejando cientos de muertos, mientras damnificados pedían ayuda a gritos y militares vigilaban regiones por la ola de saqueos. La industria minera, crucial para una de las economías más sólidas de América Latina, se sacudía el polvo y reanudaba las operaciones tras el sismo de magnitud 8,8, uno de los mayores de la historia moderna. El caos reinaba en las regiones del centro y sur de Chile, donde decenas de miles de personas pasaron

la segunda noche a la intemperie por temor a las réplicas, después de que el terremoto demolió casas, derrumbó puentes y alteró sus vidas. Las autoridades contabilizaban 723 muertos, pero la cifra parecía destinada a crecer con informes de más pueblos costeros arrasados por las gigantescas olas que siguieron al temblor. El Gobierno reconoció que falló el sistema de alerta de tsunami. Tan sólo en la localidad de Constitución, 300 kilómetros al sur de Santiago y donde olas de 15 metros arrasaron con el poblado, fueron reportadas 350 muertos, según medios

locales.

“La catástrofe es enorme (...) hay un número todavía yo diría creciente de personas desaparecidas”, dijo la presidenta Michelle Bachelet en la noche del domingo.

Los damnificados de las zonas más golpeadas se quejaban de que la ayuda no estaba llegando con rapidez, mientras muchos saqueaban supermercados, tiendas y hogares.

“La ayuda del Gobierno ha



Rescatistas en Concepción intentan ingresar en edificio dañado tras el terremoto que azotó Chile el sábado. Golpes y ruidos de vidrios guiaban el trabajo de rescatistas en un edificio colapsado, donde cerca de 50 personas aún permanecían bajo los escombros. 28 de febrero, 2010. REUTERS/Jose Luis Saavedra



Autos y escombros quedaron tras las olas gigantes provocadas por el fuerte sismo cerca del epicentro, en Dichato. Feb 28, 2010. REUTERS/Jose Luis Saavedra

sido lentísima, muy lenta. No tenemos agua ni luz; no hay nada. Los militares recién llegaron ayer y eso no alcanza para controlar la situación; los vecinos donde yo vivo se organizaron para defendernos porque están saqueando las casas”, dijo Carolina Contreras, profesora de 36 años que vive cerca de la ciudad de Concepción. Bachelet despachó unos 10.000 soldados hacia las regiones de Maule y Bío-Bío para impedir los saqueos y facilitar la distribución de ayuda para 2 millones de damnificados. “Estamos tratando de llegar de todas las maneras posibles, no es por falta de

movilización por falta de entusiasmo, por falta de ganas” que hay demoras, dijo la portavoz del Gobierno Pilar Armanet a periodistas asegurando que las comunicaciones estaban siendo muy difíciles. El aeropuerto de Santiago había sufrido severos daños y no estaba operativo. Los pocos vuelos internacionales hacia la capital fueron desviados a terminales alternativas como la de Iquique, cerca de la frontera con Bolivia, según autoridades. El sistema financiero funcionaba con normalidad. Aunque la bolsa caía el lunes un 1,8 por ciento, el peso cerró estable. □

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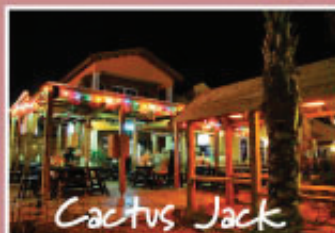


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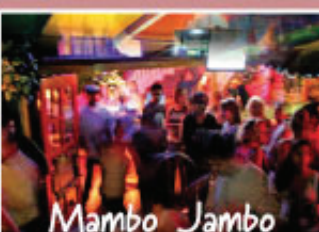
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